

This I Believe – Growing Up is a Long Learning Journey

An ignorant seedling I was before I grew up to become a stronger person. And it was the elements that I weathered that taught me how to face difficulties in life and plant my roots firmly. It was the numerous experiences I went through from which I learned and gleaned insights. I believe that this complicated process, growing up – which I am still going through right now – is really a learning journey.

I think it is a long one that continues well into adulthood. I did not suddenly grow up the moment I bade farewell to my childhood. I am slowly growing through my teenage years and even as a young adult, I will still grow and learn a lot. Hence, I believe growing up really takes a long time before I truly become wiser.

When I entered secondary school, I felt as if I was like being thrown into a totally unfamiliar environment. There were so many changes to adjust to; I have to admit I was not coping well. It was extremely challenging learning how to handle the heavy homework load. Learning to cope with stress is difficult – as I still am doing so now – and I remember struggling for quite a while.

On top of that, I had to learn how to manage peer relations. I met all sorts of people: some were nice, some weren't. Being short-tempered and not that cool-headed at that time, I actually fell out with a classmate over a group assignment. I sort of argued with her and later cried in the toilet. Subsequently, we never talked to each other for the next two years! I realised it is difficult to be friends with everyone.

Growing up is also about learning to be independent. I learned to navigate myself around Singapore, buy my own stuff from shops myself and take public transport. Exhausted from sleeping past midnight doing homework, I often dozed off in the bus on the way home and overshot my stop! The first time this happened, I was shocked when I awoke to find myself lost in a place I had not a clue about. Subsequently, I knew how to take the opposite bus route back home. Nevertheless, it was always somewhat embarrassing...

Somehow, when I became a teenager, I discovered much more about myself. I learnt about peer relationships, stress and time management, teamwork, friendship, respect, independence and many, many more. Through all my experiences in my fourteen years of life, I have learnt quite a bit about life itself. And all of these have shaped me to become a more mature person.

But I know that I am not done growing up yet, and I still have so much more to experience, live and learn. Growing up is an amazing and wonderful learning journey, this I believe. The journey may be long and seemingly endless, but I want to continue down this lane, savouring the bittersweet lessons along the way.